

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this saber-rattling resolution that unnecessarily escalates tensions between North and South Korea and may in fact put US troops stationed in the area at risk.

As the resolution states, the “USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group is conducting exercises with Republic of Korea naval forces in the waters west of the Korean Peninsula.” Let us for a moment imagine the Chinese military holding joint exercises with Venezuela off the Texas coast. Might that be viewed as provocative by the United States? This is not to excuse or endorse the actions of the North Korean military, which are certainly regrettable, but it is important to accurately portray the events.

This resolution is long on inaccuracies and hyperbole but it avoids the real issue, which is why, more than fifty years after the end of the Korean war, the American taxpayer is still forced to pay for the defense of a modern and wealthy South Korea. The continued presence of the US military as a “tripwire” to deter North Korea is ineffective and dangerous. It is designed to deter renewed hostilities by placing American lives between the two factions. As we have seen recently, South Korean leaders, emboldened by US protection, seek to provoke North Korean reaction rather than to work for a way to finally end the conflict. The US presence only serves to prolong the conflict, further drain our empty treasury, and place our military at risk. I encourage my colleagues to reject this jingoistic resolution and instead use our Constitutionally-granted authority to finally end the US military presence in and defense of South Korea.